

REMARKS

Pursuant to the above-noted Office Action, claims 1, 2, 8-14, 21-25, 27 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) given O'Neil et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,987,440) ("O'Neil"). Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) given O'Neil in view of Mehring et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,609,115) ("Mehring"). Claims 4 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) given O'Neil in view of Call (U.S. Patent No. 5,913,210) ("Call"). Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) given O'Neil in view of Allen et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2001/0051978) ("Allen"). Claims 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) given O'Neil in view of Rosenberg et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0097235) ("Rosenberg"). Claims 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) given O'Neil in view of Mehring. Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) given O'Neil and Mehring in view of Allen. Claims 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) given O'Neil and Mehring in view of Rosenberg. The applicant respectfully traverses these rejections and requests reconsideration.

Independent claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by O'Neil. O'Neil discloses a network-based architecture to support the exchange of personal information. In general, O'Neil seems concerned with ensuring the participants of such a network that other participants are essentially vouched for in some way and also with providing a mechanism to ensure that personal information regarding a given user will only be shared with other participants in a particular pre-approved fashion. O'Neil provides examples of such personal information in FIG. 28 and its accompanying text. These examples include city, date of birth, email address, ethnicity, eye color, hair, height, home address, home telephone number, place of birth, state, sex, weight, zip code, and the like. O'Neil then provides a mechanism whereby participants in such a network can conduct searches based upon such personal information to identify, for example, persons of possible interest to the searching party.

Such personal information concerns the network member themselves and not other substantive content as might be placed on the network by the member. In particular, O'Neil makes no provision for permitting an automated search of information regarding a product (such as technical specifications) that a network member might offer for sale.

With reference to FIG. 34 (incorrectly referred to in O'Neil's specification as "FIG. 201"), O'Neil does describe a so-called E-Bazaar configuration to support the buying and

selling of products within such a network. In this context, O'Neil appears to suggest that information about a given product can be made available by the E-Bazaar [column 26, lines 4-6]. Such product information, however, does not appear to be searchable in any automated fashion via the network. A "public product database 311" does not appear to be accessible by any specified search engine [see FIG. 34] and O'Neil specifically states that, "An Internet Client 303 (as E-PIA) browses the product and service offerings at the E-Bazaar." [Column 26, lines 7 - 8.] "Browsing" does not equate with an automated searching capability; rather, it suggests a window shopping metaphor. Therefore, O'Neil's limited description of an E-Bazaar does not otherwise supplement or extend O'Neil's primary teachings, which relate to providing a mechanism to support the searching of personal information regarding network members.

As amended, claim 1 clearly specifies that the member information comprises member information regarding products. Although O'Neil provides some suggestion that product information can be made accessible via his proposed network, O'Neil provides no mechanism for facilitating automatic searching of such information. Instead, O'Neil only provides for automated searching of personal information regarding network members. Claim 1, however, specifies "means for searching through member information regarding products responsive to an information request from a member." The means described by the applicant in the corresponding specification comprise automated searching processes. Since O'Neil makes no such teaching or suggestion, O'Neil does not anticipate claim 1.

Claims 2-14 are ultimately dependent upon claim 1, which claim has been shown allowable above. In addition, these claims set forth subject matter that, particularly when considered in context with the claims from which they depend, constitutes additional incremental patentable subject matter. For all these reasons, the applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-14 may be passed to allowance.

Independent claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 given O'Neil in view of Mehring. The O'Neil reference has been characterized above. Mehring teaches a centralized system documentation facility. When a user can sufficiently authenticate themselves to the satisfaction of the network, they can gain access to a centrally stored document or application. Mehring discloses various approaches to assuring that a given user of the system is in fact authorized to gain access to a given application or item of information. Mehring

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does not disclose retention of such information in other than a central facility and in particular does not suggest storing such information in remotely connected computers through which members interface to his system. Claim 15, as amended, however, provides for storage of product information in both a central storage facility and in remotely connected computers through which members interface to the information management system. Claim 15 then further provides that a security policy server select such product information as is available to each member and specification storage and provision as well. Neither O'Neil or Mehring make such a teaching, either alone or in combination with one another. Mehring essentially fairly teaches that considerable dissemination control can be gained, in part, by utilization of a central storage facility. Combining Mehring with O'Neil would therefore lead one skilled in the art to gain such benefits by providing for central storage only. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that claim 15 may be passed to allowance.

Claims 16-28 are ultimately dependent upon claim 15, which claim has been shown allowable above. In addition, these claims provide subject matter that, particularly when considered in context with the claims from which they depend, constitutes additional incremental patentable subject matter. For all these reasons, the applicant respectfully submits that claims 16-28 may be passed to allowance.

There being no other rejections of the claims, the applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-28 may be passed to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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